

Koichiro Sato

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Koichiro (Ko) Sato is one of the few attorneys in the United States with significant experience practicing both Japanese and U.S. complex litigation and dispute resolution. His practice focuses on litigation, international arbitration, and insolvency matters, with considerable experience representing clients in cross-border commercial and intellectual property matters.

Fluent in both Japanese and English, Ko's bicultural background—having been born in Japan and spending his formative years in Canada—enables him to bridge legal and cultural differences seamlessly. In addition to his focus areas, he has extensive experience serving as outside general counsel (*komon bengoshi*) for international companies, addressing a broad range of legal issues that Japanese businesses encounter when operating globally.

He is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (MCIArb) and has acted as counsel under various arbitration rules, including those of the AAA, ICC, UNCITRAL, and the Japan Commercial Arbitration Association (JCAA). He has also advised both creditors and debtors in complex in-court bankruptcies and out-of-court restructurings involving multinational stakeholders.

Prior to joining the firm, Ko practiced law as a *bengoshi* at a prominent law firm in Tokyo. After earning his LL.M. at Stanford Law School, he joined Masuda Funai as a Visiting Foreign Attorney, gaining further exposure to U.S. legal matters. Before his legal career, he worked as an audit professional in Tokyo at a “Big Four” accounting and professional services firm, having passed the CPA examination (*Kōnin Kaikeishi Shiken*) in Japan in 2008.

Ko is admitted to practice law in California and New York and is also a Solicitor in England and Wales. His extensive litigation



Education

Stanford Law School, LL.M., Law, Science & Technology, 2020 Gerald Gunther Prize for Outstanding Performance in IP: The Business & Law of Technology & Patent Licensing, Pro Bono Distinction

The Legal Training and Research Institute of the Supreme Court of Japan, 2016

Tokyo Institute of Technology Graduate School of Innovation Management (Tokyo, Japan), Master of Management of Technology, 2012

Keio University (Tokyo, Japan), Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.), 2010

Admissions

California

New York

U.S. District Court, Northern District of California

U.S. District Court, Central District of California

U.S. District Court, Southern District of California

England & Wales (Solicitor)

Practice Areas

and arbitration experience, international credentials, and deep understanding of both Japanese and U.S. legal systems make him a trusted advisor for Japanese companies facing legal challenges in the U.S.

Experience

- Defended a major audit firm in a derivative claim lawsuit of approximately USD 90 million filed by shareholders of an audited company, and a negligence claim lawsuit of around USD 30 million filed by a trust bank in a Japanese court.
- Successfully defended a global pharmaceutical company in Japanese patent invalidation proceedings.
- Advised a major Japanese manufacturer on M&A damage recovery of approximately EUR 270 million, acting as global counsel.
- Provided counsel to a global Tier 1 manufacturer in Japanese insolvency proceedings and a distressed M&A transaction for its USD 1.5 billion acquisition of a major Japanese automotive supplier.
- Advised a Nikkei 225 company in the development and implementation of a global compliance policy covering harassment, antitrust, anti-bribery, and GDPR compliance.
- Appointed assistant investigator in the Japanese civil rehabilitation proceedings (Minji Saisei) of MTGOX Co., Ltd.
- Appointed deputy investigator, deputy supervisor, and deputy trustee in the Japanese corporate reorganization proceedings (*Kaisha Kousei*) of Japan Drilling Co., Ltd., with total consolidated debt of approximately USD 800 million.
- Appointed assistant mediator in Turnaround ADR (Jigyō Saisei ADR) proceedings for a global Tier 1 manufacturer, with total debt of approximately USD 7 billion.
- Regularly appointed as a bankruptcy trustee by the Tokyo District Court.

Litigation

Commercial, Competition & Trade

Languages

English

Japanese

Memberships

- American Bar Association
- Chartered Institute of Arbitrators
- Japanese Association of Turnaround Professionals